

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A shackle assembly for transporting a poultry carcass suspended by its legs along a processing path and over a weighing scale track for weighing the carcass, the shackle assembly comprising:

a trolley support;

a bird carrier for suspending the poultry carcass by its legs;

a trolley mounted to said bird carrier for engaging the weighing scale track;

turning means mounted to said trolley support and operatively connected to said bird carrier for rotating said trolley support, said trolley and said bird carrier in unison for presenting the poultry carcass at different orientations to cutting devices located along the processing path; and

telescopic connector means including a tubular support and a rod received therein telescopically connecting said trolley support to said bird carrier and suspending said bird carrier from said trolley support;

said telescopic connector means configured for ~~providing~~ applying a weight ~~measurement to the weighing scale track~~ consisting essentially of the weight of said bird carrier, said trolley, and the carcass, but without the weight of the turning means, in response to said shackle assembly engaging the weighing scale track.

2. (Previously presented) The shackle assembly of claim 1, wherein said telescopic connector means includes an elongated slot for receiving said trolley.

3. (Cancelled)

3 A. (Previously presented) The shackle assembly of claim 1, wherein said telescopic connector means further includes said tubular support and said rod defining aligned openings; and wherein said trolley includes a wheel axle extending through said aligned openings for engaging said tubular support and said rod; at least one of said aligned openings also being of larger breadth than a cross-sectional breadth of said wheel axle for permitting telescopic movement between said tubular support and said rod in a substantially non-rotating relationship.

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4 B. (Previously presented) The shackle assembly of claim A wherein said larger-breadth opening is arranged in said tubular support.

5 C. (Currently amended) A shackle assembly for transporting a poultry carcass suspended by its legs along a processing path and over a weighing scale track for weighing the carcass, the shackle assembly comprising:

a trolley support;

a trolley mounted to said trolley support for engaging the weighing scale track;

a bird carrier for suspending the poultry carcass by its legs;

telescopic connector means for telescopically connecting said trolley support to said bird carrier and suspending said bird carrier from said trolley support;

turning means mounted to said trolley support and operatively connected to said bird carrier for rotating said trolley support and said bird carrier in unison,

said telescopic connector means including one of said trolley support and said bird carrier having a tubular support rod defining a central passage and the other of said trolley support and said bird carrier having a rod extending into said central passage,

said telescopic connector means including said trolley support having a tubular support rod defining a central passage,

said bird carrier having a rod extending into said central passage of said tubular support,

said telescopic connector means further including said tubular support and said rod defining aligned openings, and wherein said trolley includes a wheel axle extending through said aligned openings for engaging said tubular support and said rod, at least one of said aligned openings also being of larger breadth than a cross-sectional breadth of said wheel axle for permitting telescopic movement between said tubular support and said rod in a substantially non-rotating relationship,

said larger-breadth opening being arranged in said tubular support rod, and

said turning means including a pin for indicating an angular position of the turning means.

67. (Currently amended) A shackle assembly for transporting a poultry carcass suspended by its legs along a processing path and over a weighing scale for weighing the carcass, the shackle assembly comprising:

a trolley support;

a bird carrier for suspending a poultry carcass by its legs, said bird carrier supported by said trolley support;

a trolley mounted to said bird carrier for engaging the weighing scale;

turning means, mounted to said trolley support, for rotating said trolley support and said trolley together with said bird carrier, in response to engagement by a cam along the processing path; and

connector means telescopically connecting said bird carrier to said trolley support; said connector means configured for ~~providing- applying~~ a weight ~~measurement to the weighing scale~~ consisting essentially of the weight of said bird carrier, said trolley, and the carcass, when said shackle assembly engages the weighing scale.

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7 ~~8~~. (Currently amended) The shackle assembly of claim ⁶7, wherein said connector means comprises said trolley support and said bird carrier having overlapping ends with aligned openings extending therethrough with at least one of said aligned openings formed as an elongated slot, and said trolley having a wheel axle extending through said aligned openings and movable along said slot.

~~8~~ ~~7~~. (Original) The shackle assembly of claim ⁷~~8~~, wherein said overlapping ends are adapted to move axially with respect to each other in response to the trolley passing over the weighing scale.

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~~10~~. (Original) The shackle assembly of claim ⁷~~8~~, wherein said telescopic connector means includes one of said trolley support and said bird carrier having a tubular support defining a central passage and the other of said trolley support and said bird carrier having a rod extending into said central passage.

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¹⁰~~11~~. (Original) The shackle assembly of claim ⁹~~10~~, wherein a top end of said rod is fixed to said trolley support and a top end of said tubular support slideably receives said rod.

¹⁰
¹¹~~12~~. (Original) The shackle assembly of claim ¹⁰~~11~~ wherein said bird carrier is fixed to a bottom end of said tubular support.

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¹²~~13~~. (Original) The shackle assembly of claim ⁹~~10~~, wherein a top end of said tubular support is fixed to said trolley support and a bottom end of said tubular support slideably receives said rod.

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¹³~~14~~. (Original) The shackle assembly of claim ¹²~~13~~, wherein said bird carrier is fixed to a bottom end of said rod.

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¹⁴~~15~~. (Original) The shackle assembly of claim ⁸~~9~~, wherein one of said aligned openings is a slotted opening.

¹⁵
~~16~~. (Previously presented) The shackle assembly of claim ¹⁴~~15~~, wherein said slotted opening is formed in one of said rod and said tubular support.

17. (Cancelled)

¹⁶ ~~18~~. (Allowed) A shackle assembly for transporting a poultry carcass suspended by its legs along a processing path and over a weighing scale for weighing the carcass, the shackle assembly comprising:

a trolley support;

a trolley mounted to said trolley support for engaging the weighing scale;

a bird carrier for suspending a poultry carcass by its legs, said bird carrier supported by said trolley support;

connector means for non-rotatably and telescopically connecting said bird carrier to said trolley support; and

turning means mounted to said trolley support for turning said bird carrier in response to engagement by a cam along the processing path,

said connector means comprising said trolley support and said bird carrier having overlapping ends with aligned openings extending there through, and said trolley having a wheel axle extending through said aligned openings,

said overlapping ends being adapted to move axially with respect to each other in response to the trolley passing over the weighing scale,

one of said aligned openings being a slotted opening,

said slotted opening being formed in said tubular support, and
said turning means includes a pin for indicating an angular position of the turning means.

12/19. (Currently amended) A method of processing poultry carcasses as the carcasses move along a poultry processing path and for weighing the carcasses on a weighing scale as the carcasses are moved along the processing path, the method comprising:

~~suspending a bird carcass from the bird carrier;~~

telescopically suspending a trolley, a bird carrier and a bird carcass in the bird carrier from a trolley support;

as the bird moves through the processing path turning the trolley, the bird carrier and the carcasses with a turning means about a vertical axis to present the bird carcass in desired orientations as the bird carcass moves through the processing path;

cutting the carcass into segments as the bird moves through the processing path;

passing the ~~bird carrier~~ trolley over the weighing scale;

in response to passing the ~~bird carrier~~ trolley over the weighing scale, telescopically lifting the trolley, the bird carrier and the bird carcass with respect to the trolley support and the turning means; and

~~obtaining~~ applying with the trolley a weight measurement to the weighing scale consisting essentially of the weight of the bird carrier, the trolley and the carcass but without the weight of the trolley support and turning means, as the carcass passes over the scale.

~~turning the carcasses about a vertical axis; and~~

~~cutting the carcass into segments.~~

¹⁸
~~20.~~ (Original) The method of claim ¹⁷~~19~~ wherein the step of turning the carcasses about a vertical axis comprises:

moving the trolley support along the processing path; and

engaging a cam follower mounted on the trolley support with a cam positioned along the processing path.

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~~21.~~ (Previously presented) The method of claim ¹⁷~~19~~ wherein the step of telescopically lifting the bird and the bird carrier with respect to the trolley support comprises one of telescoping the bird carrier with respect to said trolley support and of telescoping the trolley support with respect to said bird carrier.

22. (Cancelled)

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~~23.~~ (Currently amended) A shackle assembly for transporting a poultry carcass suspended by its legs along a processing path including a weighing scale track of a weight scale for weighing the carcass, the shackle assembly comprising:

a vertically disposed upper rod assembly including an upper rod, and a turning means configured for rotating said upper rod;

a vertically disposed lower rod assembly including a lower rod, a stirrup at the bottom end of said lower rod for suspending the poultry carcass by its legs, and a trolley attached to an upper portion of said lower rod, said trolley comprising a wheel axle extending horizontally through said lower rod and at least two wheels mounted on said axle straddling said lower rod, so that said trolley, lower rod and stirrup are rotatable in unison about a vertical axis, and wherein said trolley is configured for engaging said shackle assembly to said weighing scale track and moving said shackle assembly along the processing path; and

a telescopic connector that couples said upper rod assembly to said lower rod assembly, said telescopic connector comprising a tubular support longitudinally attached to a lower end of said upper rod,

said tubular support defining a central passage configured to slideably receive said lower rod,

said tubular support defining a horizontally aligned pair of slotted openings intersecting said central passage configured for receiving said wheel axle, wherein each slotted opening has a width generally sized to the diameter of said wheel axle and a height sized for slideable vertical movement of said wheel axle when said shackle assembly is transported over the weighing scale track,

wherein upon slideable vertical movement upward of said wheel axle, the weight measured by the weighing scale consists essentially of the weight of said lower rod assembly together with suspended carcass, but without the weight of the upper rod and turning means.

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~~24~~. (Previously presented) The shackle assembly of claim ²⁰~~23~~, wherein the processing path includes a treatment station comprising a cut up module, wherein said turning means includes a protrusion for indicating a radial position of said upper rod, wherein said turning means is employed to position the shackle assembly for cutting the carcass, and the shackle assembly holds the carcass substantially stationary thereon to allow cutting of the carcass.

~~24~~ ²⁵. (Currently amended) A shackle assembly for transporting a poultry carcass suspended by its legs along a processing path including a weighing scale track of a weight scale for weighing the carcass, the shackle assembly comprising:

a vertically disposed upper rod assembly including an upper rod, and a turning means configured for rotating said upper rod;

a vertically disposed tubular support assembly including a stirrup at the bottom end of said tubular support for suspending the poultry carcass by its legs, and a trolley attached to an upper portion of said tubular support, said trolley comprising a wheel axle extending horizontally through said tubular support and at least two wheels mounted on said wheel axle straddling said tubular support, said trolley being configured for supporting said shackle assembly on said weighing scale track, and

a telescopic connector comprising said tubular support defining a central passage configured to slideably receive said upper rod,

said upper rod includes a horizontally aligned pair of slotted openings intersecting said central passageway configured for receiving said wheel axle, wherein each slotted opening has a width generally sized to the diameter of said wheel axle and a height sized for slideable vertical movement of said wheel axle when said shackle assembly is transported over the weighing scale track,

~~wherein such that when the trolley is lifted by the weight scale and upon slideable~~ vertical movement upward of said wheel axle, the weight ~~measured~~ applied by the trolley to the weighing scale consists essentially of the weight of said tubular support assembly and the trolley together with suspended carcass but without the weight of the upper rod assembly.

²³_{26.} (Previously presented) The shackle assembly of claim ²²~~28~~, and further including: a position indicating means rotatable with said turning means for indicating a radial position of said upper rod.